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AN
ADDRESS
TO THE
/ **SOCIETY OF FRIENDS**
ON THE
TEMPERANCE REFORMATION,
BY
JOSEPH EATON.

LONDON:
E. FRY AND SON, BISHOPSGATE STREET.

MDCCCXXXIX.

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AN ADDRESS
TO THE
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
ON THE
TEMPERANCE REFORMATION.

DEAR FRIENDS,

Your attention has heretofore been directed to the Temperance Reformation, and your co-operation earnestly solicited on its behalf, as a question in the success of which, the welfare and happiness of your fellow-men are very deeply involved. Experience has confirmed and strengthened the views then entertained, and a closer examination of the subject has produced an increased conviction of the magnitude and enormity of the evils resulting from the use of intoxicating drinks; as also of the probability, that the efforts now making for the removal and prevention of those evils, will, under the divine blessing, be ultimately crowned with success.

Under these circumstances you are again appealed to, and earnestly entreated to reflect on the great amount of good or evil which your example must unavoidably produce, and of the responsibility attaching to you from the exercise of that example.

The great christian duty of promoting the moral and religious welfare of the poorer classes of our countrymen, has at various times been enforced upon the members of our Society, and it has been gratifying to witness the disposition which has prevailed to advance these important objects.

In 1833, the following advice was issued in the printed epistle :—

“ The degraded and demoralized state of the poor in many parts of the United Kingdom, and the great extent of crime

have at this time deeply affected us. We therefore entreat Friends in their respective situations in town and country, to search out the causes of these things. We apprehend that among these causes will be found those abridgments of the comfort of the labourer, which tend to a wretched and disreputable pauperism. We earnestly desire that Friends may be exemplary in their attention to this important subject, and that they may encourage their neighbours, and unite with them in their endeavours to apply a remedy to these evils. And seeing it is sin which separates the soul from God, and that ignorance and intemperance, vice and irreligion so much prevail among the inhabitants of the British Isles, we are desirous that our members may allow their sympathies to be awakened for these our fellow-subjects." The minute concludes with expressing its "earnest desire, that, under the blessing of Providence, they may be made instrumental to effect a real improvement in the domestic, moral, and religious state of our fellow-men."

In accordance with the excellent advice here given, many of our members have been engaged in searching out the causes of these things, and after careful examination have become convinced, that by far the larger portion of the vice and irreligion, the crime and wretchedness so generally prevalent among the inhabitants of the British Isles, is distinctly traceable to the customary use of intoxicating drinks, and that those abridgments of the comfort of the labourer, chiefly arise from this baneful practice.

In proof of this, the following facts are adduced, exhibiting the delightful reformation which has been effected amongst those who have abandoned the use of those drinks.

In the report of the Birmingham Total Abstinence Society for the year 1838, we have the following statement:—

"During the past year, a very careful scrutiny has been made as to the moral and religious condition of those who have become members of the society; the result of which is truly gratifying and encouraging. There are at the present time registered in the society's books, 177 individuals, once known as dissolute drunkards, Sabbath breakers, terrors to their families, now not only consistent members of tee-totallism, but 170 of whom are regular frequenters of places of worship;

and it need scarcely be added, that the houses and families of these present a change which portrays one of the fruits and effects of sobriety, combined with correct moral and religious practice."

In the course of one year, the increase in the number of Sabbath School children in the extensive and populous parish of Halifax, was computed to be at least three thousand, a circumstance that was mostly attributed to the operations of the Total Abstinence Society, which had been remarkably active and successful in its operations during that year.

At Camborne, in Cornwall, during the course of a few months, eighty children were admitted into the Wesleyan Sabbath School at that place, all of whom, it was ascertained, had been previously prevented from attending in consequence of the drinking habits of their parents. In most of these cases, the parents had not been what is generally termed intemperate drinkers, but as is usually the case with the labouring poor, their limited means of support had been grievously misapplied, under the delusive notion that a considerable quantity of strong drink was necessary to enable them to perform their daily toil. If viewed as an auxiliary to the cause of education, and the right training of youth, the Temperance Reformation must be regarded as one of the most effectual means of improving the condition of our population—the increased interest felt by parents in the welfare of their children, and their desire to send them to school, being very generally observable.

J. C. Symons, one of the assistant commissioners on the Hand-Loom Enquiry, in a work just published, entitled, "*Arts and Artisans, at Home and Abroad*," gives the following testimony to the effects of total abstinence upon our working population; which, coming from a person professionally employed by government to obtain information on the condition of that class of society, must be regarded as exceedingly valuable:—"The tee-total societies are making most strenuous efforts for the salvation of the working-classes, and, on the whole, I am disposed to consider them the most effectively useful body now in existence in this country."

Many statements similar to the foregoing might be quoted, but the following will suffice. It is taken from a speech, delivered by H. E. Graham, Rector of Ludgvan, near Penzance, who has become a warm advocate of the cause:—

“ When I first came to Ludgvan I made every attempt to stay the then prevailing vice of drunkenness, by my pen, and from the pulpit, and also by the exercise of Magisterial power, but to no purpose. I considered the case hopeless, and would have gladly quitted the living, for one of half its value. One of my parishioners observed, that the Church doors might as well be shut, as scarcely any would come within its walls on the Sabbath day. But by the formation of this (the Total Abstinence) Society, how has the scene been changed within a few months; now there is scarcely a drunken man to be seen!! The Church is crowded with attentive and well clad hearers. I find I have the affections of my parishioners, and I should refuse to exchange my situation for the greatest preferment that could be bestowed on me.”*

These statements exhibit most remarkably the extraordinary extent to which the best interests of our countrymen have been injured by the prevailing use of strong-drink, as, also, the benefits which we may confidently expect would result from the complete success of the Temperance Reformation, involving, as it obviously does, the removal of probably the most formidable obstacle to all good, and powerful outward incentive to evil, that lays waste the happiness of man—for great and appalling as are the more gross and obvious cases of depravity arising from intemperance, yet scarce a doubt can be entertained that a yet larger amount of the evil occasioned by strong

* Much interesting information of the progress of the cause of total abstinence will be found in the third report of the New British and Foreign Temperance Society, now in the press. The character and design of the society, in reply to objections of a religious nature, is well stated in the following extract:—
“ With reference to the intemperate, total abstinence was the mere removal of the physical causes of physical and intellectual disorder, and was never intended to accomplish a holy or spiritual renovation; and that, with the temperate, it was merely the withdrawal of those temptations to evil, which the gospel as much enjoins us to flee from as from sin itself.”

drink, will be found to arise from that comparatively moderate use, which though not leading to acts of flagrant wickedness, nevertheless powerfully excites the corrupt propensities of our nature, leads to great irregularity of the passions, and blunts that moral feeling and religious susceptibility, on which the right performance of the relative and social duties of life so much depends. In these respects the effects on the morals of the rising generation must be almost indescribably great.

In 1835, the Yearly Meeting, again drew the attention of its members to this subject, by a minute, from which the following is extracted, and in which the evils that afflict the inhabitants of this country, are more distinctly referred to the vice of intemperance :—

“ This Meeting has been brought under renewed concern respecting the dreadful evils which result to the community from intemperance, and especially from the use of ardent spirits ; and it recommends to Friends, individually, *seriously to examine what it is in their power to do towards diminishing this fruitful source of evil.* We consider that abstaining from the use of distilled spirits except for medicinal purposes, would not only preserve many from a snare into which they might otherwise be drawn, but might be highly useful as an example to others more exposed to the temptation :—and we believe that those who, from love to God and their neighbour, are willing thus to deny themselves the use of these articles, will find satisfaction therein.

“ We would tenderly advise all our members, especially those about to establish themselves in business, seriously to weigh the numerous evils obviously connected with trading in spirituous liquors.”

“ The dreadful evils which result to the community from intemperance,” are here more especially ascribed to the use of ardent spirits, in accordance with the views generally entertained at that time ; subsequent investigation and a more intimate acquaintance with the subject, have however, pretty clearly established the fact, that at the present time in this country a much larger amount of intemperance, arises from the use of beer and other fermented drinks than from ardent spirits ; and experience having proved that they are not only unnecessary as a beverage, but more commonly *injurious* than *beneficial*,

can a doubt be entertained that they ought now on moral grounds to be classed with ardent spirits, and their use discountenanced?

That the foregoing sentiments are now making their way and have been to a considerable extent adopted among Christian professors is undoubted. In America this is remarkably the case. The ninth report of the New York State Temperance Society asserts:—that “of the two thousand two hundred and sixty-one Clergymen* in the State of New York, nineteen hundred and fifty-two are total abstinent, being more than eight-ninths of the whole—in fifteen out of fifty-six counties every Clergyman is a total abstinent.” “There are some of the counties in which all the physicians and surgeons have signed the pledge.”—On the 20th of the 9th month last year, the first Baptist Church of Philadelphia, passed the following among other resolutions respecting intoxicating liquors—the preamble to those resolutions, declaring the use of such liquors “to be one of the greatest evils of the present day,” “producing a large portion of the pauperism and crime which exist in the community, and operating in its multiplied forms of mischief, as a most powerful obstacle to the promotion of piety, virtue, and happiness among men.”—Therefore, “*Resolved*, that it is the settled and deliberate conviction of this Church, that to use intoxicating liquors as a drink, unless in cases of sickness, or to aid in their circulation and consumption, by engaging directly or indirectly in the business of making or vending them, except for sacramental, medical, or manufacturing purposes is plainly immoral, contrary to the spirit of the New Testament, and inconsistent with a Christian profession.” These sentiments are confessedly in considerable advance of public opinion in this country, but let us not on that account hastily reject them. So great is the effect of education and habit upon even the most pious and enlightened of mankind, that we can scarcely exercise too great a degree of jealousy over ourselves, when so much under its influence, as in the present

* In America, the term Clergymen is applied to ministers of every religious denomination.

instance. It may possibly afford us salutary caution to reflect, that but few years comparatively have passed since the criminal practice of slave-holding, now all but universally regarded as a most flagrant enormity, was common among Christian professors, and in our own society the pious and dedicated Woolman, for his noble testimony on this subject, had no small share of suffering to undergo from those filling the highest ranks amongst us.

The spread of light and knowledge is ordinarily very gradual, and the right application of the principles of the gospel to the affairs of life, opposed as it not unfrequently is to customs originating in, and congenial to the corrupt propensities of our nature, is for a time, too commonly withstood even by the wise and good. But assuredly a custom, which (notwithstanding it may have been practiced by the wise and good in former days) is now become a more prolific source of vice, immorality, and wretchedness, than probably all other outward incentives to evil put together, cannot be much longer tolerated among any body of Christian professors. Whatever can be advanced on the ground of the abstract lawfulness of the practice cannot materially affect the question; such is not the standard held up to us in the New Testament; for while Christianity does not debar its followers from any pleasures or gratifications, that are not prejudicial to their eternal interests, it doubtless forbids such as are opposed thereto; and it is instructive, as exhibiting the peculiar danger of lawful things, to reflect how frequently they are alluded to by our Saviour, as those which his followers may be called upon to resign.

Nor must this measure of our enjoyment of the good things of this life be limited to ourselves. The Apostle in declaring "it is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak," undoubtedly lays down a principle, which, under whatever circumstances we may be placed, requires that the use of even the most lawful things should be abandoned, if a brother's welfare is thereby endangered.

In accordance with these principles, our own Society takes a stand, in regard to music and some other re-

creations,* it also advises against reading plays, romances, novels, and other pernicious books, on account of the "*hurtful tendency*" of so doing; and in the printed Epistle 1767, under the head "Parents and Education," parents are advised respecting their children, to "Be careful not to indulge them *in any thing of evil tendency.*" Plays, &c. are among the things enumerated. Have we yet to learn that strong drink is a "thing of evil tendency?" *Had any book produced the mischief among our members that strong drink has occasioned, it would doubtless long since have been expelled from amongst us.*

To the instances already enumerated of the great benefits which have resulted from the Temperance Reformation, many others of a similar character might be added, and almost numberless cases of individual reformation of an exceedingly gratifying description. Do you then desire, that a cause, which has thus accomplished such great good, and which holds out such gladdening prospects for the future, should go forward or be arrested in its progress? *One of these two things you are daily instrumental in promoting.* Neutrality is impossible where example is concerned; an unsound opinion may be held without injury to others, but such is the constitution of our nature that it cannot be the case with example, which is ever speaking and exercising a silent though certain influence on all around us for good or for evil; and if those who by speaking or writing incite others to action, are held responsible for the persuasion they may so employ, can those be held blameless who exercise the yet more powerful influence of example? There are probably few amongst us but would shrink

* "In a work, by Basil Montagu, published in 1814, entitled 'Some Enquiries into the Effects of Fermented Liquors,' he has quoted at some length, extracts from Clarkson's Portraiture, explanatory of the grounds on which our Society discountenances music, and some other pursuits of a similar character, and gives it as his opinion, that, on the same principles, we should discard the use of fermented liquors. Among other remarks are the following, 'I have endeavoured, but in vain, to reconcile this permission by the Quakers to use fermented liquors, with their general doctrines and virtuous practices.'"

from the responsibility of re-introducing strong drink into any of those districts or families from which it had been banished by the agency of the Temperance reformation, and in which the greatest blessings had resulted from the change. But is it not essentially the same, by our example, to sanction its continuance in other districts or families? Even as respects our own Society, who would venture to assert that it was better, that the many grievous instances of backsliding and ruin which have already occurred amongst us, should have taken place, rather than that our members should have debarred themselves the use of strong drink? If no one will affirm this position, on what ground can we be justified in still following the same course?

Our friend, James Backhouse, in the extract from one of his interesting communications, published under the sanction of the Society, and in unison, it may be presumed, with their general views on the subject, has the following striking observation on the subject of example, and of the responsibility arising therefrom, in relation to the poor condemned criminals in our colonies, whom he so generally found to be the victims of strong drink.* “Had justice towards offenders been more duly considered, it would probably long ere this have induced the legislature to have inquired more seriously than it has done into the causes of crime, with a view to remedying them; this consideration is especially due to criminals, when it appears the use of ardent spirits is the chief cause of crime, and that by legalizing the sale of this article, *and the countenance given to its use by the community*, they and the government are the chief pa-

* A Roman Catholic Clergyman, who resided some years among the convicts in our penal settlements, expresses himself to this effect, in a work recently published, entitled, *Horrors of Transportation*:—“Were I asked what, next to the convict’s ignorance of the horrors of the state on which he was about to enter, was the chief cause of transportation? I should reply—Intemperance. Were I asked a second time, I should answer—Intemperance. And were I asked the third time, I should still answer—Intemperance; and so on, as often as the question was put to me.”

trons of crime." "Unless the incentives to crime be removed, punishing it, will only be like trying to pump out a river that threatens inundation to a country, while the remedy of turning the course of the springs that supply it, is neglected."

The course here recommended is precisely that which has been adopted with so much success by the Total Abstinence Society, the principles of which, it is gratifying to learn by a letter recently received, that our friend now zealously advocates. If those who countenance drinking spirits are patrons of the crime produced by the practice they so uphold, it assuredly is deserving the serious consideration of our friends, whether those who countenance beer drinking are not equally patrons of the crimes that result therefrom? With the exceptions of some large cities and towns, beer drinking is now far more generally the occasion of intemperance than spirit drinking, and that appetite for strong drink which leads forward its victims to the use of ardent spirits most commonly originates in drinking the weaker liquors, the use of which, may therefore be regarded as signally fraught with danger. Had the excellent advice of our friend, in regard to removing "the incentives to crime" been but duly regarded, and the same amount of philanthropic exertions now made to reclaim the criminal, and relieve the victims of distress, been applied *to the removal of the incentives to evil*—how large a portion of the crimes now committed and of the misery consequently suffered, would in all probability have been saved. We continue laboriously to pump out the water, while the course of the springs that supplies the stream is suffered to remain the same. Unceasing labour is bestowed to reclaim the victims of a bad custom, while by our example we uphold the continuance of that custom, and are instrumental in inducing others to become its victims.

At a public meeting recently held in Dublin, T. Purdon, Governor of the Richmond Bridewell, declared, that since the ninth month, last year, "there had been committed by the Magistrates for riots and confined in a new part of the prison, erected for the purpose, not fewer than two thousand persons, of whom 1870, for he had kept an

accurate account, were punished for crimes perpetrated in fits of drunkenness."

When urging the important subject of example on the temperate, they not unfrequently reply, that they set an example, which if followed, the evils so much complained of would happily be avoided; while it is quite true that such would be the case, it may be profitable for them to consider the means by which they have been enabled to set an example of strict undeviating temperance, and to reflect that multitudes, once equally temperate as themselves, have fallen victims to strong drink. Can it then be well to set an example which influences others to enter on a custom so manifestly fraught with danger, when by their example they might be instrumental in leading them *from* such dangers? How many wise and good men have there been, who could they witness the effects which have resulted from training up their families to the use of intoxicating drinks, would now in no wise tolerate the formation of so baneful and destructive a habit?

It is undoubted that the pious and the temperate exercise the greatest moral influence on society; and while the example of the drunkard loudly proclaims the injurious properties of strong drink, that of the temperate and good, powerfully contributes to support those popular delusions which mainly uphold the drinking customs of the country;—that strong drink may be *beneficially* and *safely* used as a customary beverage; and hence it is generally the case, that while the advocate of abstinence quotes the *drunkard*, in proof of the soundness of his views, the *inebriate*, and those acquiring the appetite for strong drink, refer to the *respectable moderate drinker* as authority for their continuing to use it.

Connected with the question under consideration are many subjects of great importance, on which it is scarcely possible now to enter, but it may not be improper, cursorily to notice that of the right application of our temporal substance. At a low computation it will appear, that within the last twenty-five years the members of our Society have expended a sum, most probably amounting to one million pounds sterling, in the purchase of an article from which much evil has arisen, and scarcely any

conceivable benefit. How much good might not this money have accomplished, if applied to the promotion of religious and philanthropic objects?

In conclusion, dear friends, be entreated to give this subject that consideration, which the important interests it involves so deservedly claim at your hands. Various and multiplied have been the attempts for ages past to put an end to the evils resulting from the use of strong drink; its temperate use has been urged upon our countrymen by every consideration which a regard to their present and eternal welfare could suggest, but intemperance still continues the scourge of our land; and so extensive are its ravages, that but few families can be found, which have not, in some measure, experienced its desolating power.

What then remains to be done? Are we still to go on sanctioning the use of an article, of such ensnaring and dangerous properties? Even in our own society, the members of which are blessed with no common advantages, its deplorable effects have been deeply felt; assuredly, then, we are precluded all reasonable ground of hope that it can be used by society at large without producing a fearful amount of evil. Nothing short of the most extraordinary benefits resulting from the use of it, would seem to justify our continuing this fruitful occasion of misery and immorality amongst us. But what are those benefits which custom has caused us to estimate so highly? Thousands, who a few years ago considered some kind of intoxicating drink almost essential to the full enjoyment of health, have found that they were greatly mistaken. In numerous cases entire abstinence has proved remarkably advantageous, and the opinion of many of the first medical practitioners is decidedly unfavorable to the use of it as a beverage. But admitting there are cases in which some little advantage to health may be derived from it: is such a circumstance, or the gratification arising from the use of it, deserving of the slightest consideration when put into comparison with the tremendous evils it is inflicting on every class of the community?

During the last few years much light has been thrown

on this subject, and hence an alteration in our practice may reasonably become desirable. Till quite a recent period drunkenness has been generally regarded as one of those evils to which we were almost unavoidably subject—the important circumstance appears to have been very much, or altogether overlooked—that *it is a vice resulting from an appetite not natural to us, but formed by habit*, and that in very many, if not most cases, *we actually require some degree of training to enter upon it*. Are we then to go on training up one generation after another to a habit which, under the most favourable circumstances is fraught with danger; when that habit is altogether unnecessary?

May we, then, be induced to lay these things seriously to heart, and under a sense of the immorality and wretchedness occasioned by intemperance, especially among the poorer classes of our countrymen, consider what it is in our power to do, both individually and collectively, towards removing this fruitful source of evil. Great indeed are the blessings which have attended the efforts already made for its removal; and under a cheering hope that, with the divine blessing, a moral reformation of our country will be effected to a much greater extent than has ever yet been witnessed, may we ere long exhibit to the world, the bright example of a whole Christian community, denying themselves a popular indulgence for the sake of promoting the temporal and eternal well-being of their fellow men.

Your friend sincerely,

Bristol, 5th Mo. 1839.

JOSEPH EATON.

IMPORTANT MEDICAL TESTIMONY.

The following document has already been signed by the highly distinguished individuals whose names are attached to it, and it is still in the course of signature. The statements it contains will be found in entire consistency with the fact, that a large proportion of the human family, many of whom are employed in the most laborious occupations, do not use intoxicating drinks; a fact of itself abundantly sufficient to prove that they are really unnecessary.

"An opinion, handed down from rude and ignorant times, and imbibed by Englishmen from their youth has become very general, that the habitual use of some portion of Alcoholic drink, as of wine, beer, or spirit, is beneficial to health, and even necessary for those subjected to habitual labour.

"Anatomy, physiology, and the experience of all ages, and countries, when properly examined, must satisfy every mind well informed in Medical science, that the above opinion is altogether erroneous. Man, in ordinary health, like other animals, requires not any such stimulants, and cannot be benefited by the *habitual* employment of any quantity of them, large or small; nor will their use during his lifetime increase the aggregate amount of his labour. In whatever quantity they are employed, they will rather tend to diminish it.

"When he is in a state of temporary debility from illness, or other causes, a temporary use of them as of other tonic medicines may be desirable; but, as soon as he is raised to his natural standard of health, a continuance of their use can do no good to him, even in the most moderate quantities, while larger quantities, (yet such as by many persons are thought moderate,) do sooner or later prove injurious to the human constitution, without any exceptions.

"It is my opinion, that the above statement is substantially correct."

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